

DFEH News Brief

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Contact: Lisa Zeltner
916-585-7088
lisa.zeltner@dfeh.ca.gov

CAR DEALERSHIPS ACCUSED OF PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION PAY \$279,400 TO SETTLE DFEH ACCUSATION

ELK GROVE, CA -- The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) today announced a \$279,400 settlement of an administrative case filed against the owners of Victory Toyota and Lexus Monterey Peninsula in Seaside, California. The Department's action accused the car dealerships of demoting and subsequently firing a female employee because of her pregnancy.

In March 2008, Finance Manager Stephanie Faiello-Olson informed her employer that she was pregnant. Shortly thereafter, she requested a reduced work schedule because of her pregnancy. According to the Department, instead of accommodating her request, the respondents allegedly transferred Ms. Faiello-Olson to a lower-volume dealership, thereby reducing her income, which was commission-based. In July 2008, Ms. Faiello-Olson went on pregnancy leave; several weeks later, she was fired.

"California's Fair Employment & Housing Act protects workers from discrimination because of their pregnancy," said DFEH Director Phyllis Cheng. "A pregnant worker cannot be forced to choose between her family and her job just because her employer finds it inconvenient to accommodate her."

As part of the settlement, respondents also agreed to attend discrimination prevention training, modify their anti-discrimination policies, and prominently display the Department's workplace discrimination and harassment poster. In settling the case, the employers did not admit liability.

The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence. For more information, visit the Department's Web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

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